

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, PDSC, CH, US

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S STATEMENT ON CHAIRMAN MAO'S DEATH

1. THE SECRETARY READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO THE PRESS
SEPTEMBER 9:

QUOTE: I EXTEND MY SYMPATHY TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON THE OCCASION OF
CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG'S DEATH. CHAIRMAN MAO WAS AN
HISTORIC FIGURE WHO CHANGED THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN THE
WORLD. HE HAD TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON THE PRESENT AND ON THE
FUTURE OF HIS COUNTRY. IN THE LAST YEARS OF HIS LIFE WE
WORKED CLOSELY WITH HIM ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS
BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. HIS PERSONAL INTEREST IN THAT
PROCESS WAS A VITAL FACTOR IN THE SINO-AMERICAN RAPPROCHE-
MENT WHICH BEGAN IN 1972. WE HAVE SINCE THAT TIME CREATED
A DURABLE RELATIONSHIP BASED ON MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND A
PERCEPTION OF COMMON INTERESTS; AND WE, FOR OUR PART, WILL
CONTINUE TO CEMENT OUR TIES WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
CHINA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE."

2. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH MAO
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WAS HELPFUL IN IMPROVING SINO-US RELATIONS AND WHAT THE

FUTURE HELD FOR THIS PROCESS WITHOUT MAO, THE SECRETARY STRESSED THAT, FOR OUR PART, WE WILL CONTINUE THE PROCESS BEGUN BY THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE; AS FOR THE CHINESE, THE SECRETARY STRESSED AT SEVERAL POINTS THAT THE CHINESE-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP WAS BASED ON WHAT EACH SIDE PERCEIVED AS BEING IN ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS, NOT ON PERSONALITIES INVOLVED. ASKED WHETHER IT MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN BETTER TO HAVE PRESSED HARDER FOR NORMALIZATION WITH PEKING WHILE MAO WAS ALIVE, AND WHETHER POST-MAO PRC MIGHT NOT HEAL ITS RUPTURE WITH THE SOVIET, SECRETARY KISSINGER AGAIN EMPHASIZED THAT THE PERSONALITIES INVOLVED WERE NOT THE DETERMINING FACTOR, BUT WHAT PEKING SEES AS IN ITS OWN BEST INTERESTS.

3. QUESTIONED WHOM THE US WOULD DEAL WITH NOW AS HEAD OF THE PRC, THE SECRETARY REPLIED THAT WE WOULD LOOK TO THE PREMIER. IN REPLY TO QUERIES, HE SAID HE HAS NO PLANS TO VISIT THE PRC BEFORE THE ELECTION; OBVIOUSLY, ELECTION RESULTS WOULD HAVE A BEARING ON PLANS THEREAFTER. PRESSED ABOUT WHETHER THE RISE TO LEADERSHIP OF A FACTION HOSTILE TO THE US WOULD IMPAIR RELATIONS WITH PEKING, HE REPLIED THAT THIS, NATURALLY, COULD BE LIKELY IF SUCH A FACTION WAS IN POWER; BUT HE SAID AGAIN THAT THE PRC COURSE WILL BE DETERMINED BY ITS OWN SELF-INTEREST, NOT BY PERSONAL LIKES OR DISLIKES.

4. ASKED FOR AN EVALUATION OF MAO, THE PERSON, THE SECRETARY SAID THE CHAIRMAN WAS A FORCEFUL PERSONALITY, WHO MADE HIMSELF THE CENTER OF THE ROOM BY THE WILL POWER HE REFLECTED. HE SAID MAO TALKED IN EPIGRAMMATIC FASHION; THAT NOTHING HE SAID WAS EVER WITHOUT PURPOSE, AND EACH COMMENT HE VOICED WAS ILLUMINATING.
KISSINGER

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